1:Franken et al M, G-5 (ca. 1913-1948)1960
OF7 Balinese OF7

175 792 In historical times Wira Dalĕm Kesari is mentioned as the founder of the temple. In him we can probably see the Kesari Warmadewa of an inscription dating from around 913 A.D.[15] In that day the temple may have been a Buddhist sanctuary, and at the same time the state temple of the Warmadewa dynasty. Even up to the present century the rule has been observed that only a Buddhist *pĕdanda* accompanying the ruler as his court priest may enter Pura Bĕsakih. Later the founder of the dynasty of Gelgel was brought into a special relation with Mahadewa, the deity of Pura Bĕsakih.[16] Two temple charters dating from around 1450 probably owe their origin to that prince. Since that time the deified dead of the dynasty have been worshipped in Bĕsakih, and the temple has thus become the royal ancestral sanctuary, first of Gelgel and later of Klungkung. It is, then, not surprising that a charter also mentions *merus*[17] for five rulers of the Gelgel dynasty.

The Hindu trinity is also associated with the temple of Bĕsakih.[18] Such a connection with the highest gods of the Hindu pantheon is quite in keeping with the important place of the temple in the Balinese world picture.[19]

It can be seen, then, that various elements of Balinese culture and religion have contributed to the complex of phenomena related with Bĕsakih temple as it is today.

(*e*) The *Usana Bali*, discussed above, was a product of the royal sphere, written at the Javanized court at Gelgel. A copy of it, however, is to be found among the sacred manuscripts of Tĕnganan Pĕgĕringsingan, a traditional *desa* with an *adat* like that of the *Bali-aga*, the non-Javanized Hindu-Balinese. Moreover the *Usana* considers Balinese religion and culture as imported from India. But when one scrutinizes the religious festivals and ceremonies listed in it, one wonders how Hindu gods could have imported elements which appear to have been early indigenous rather than Hindu.

545 198 (*f*) As a final point reference may be made to the 'interpreters' on the Balinese stage. When the hero and heroine in some *genres* of Balinese drama recite their parts they do so in a sort of Java-

l:Franken et al M, G-5 (ca. 1913-1958) 1960
OF7 Balinese OF7

nized Balinese which is nearly incomprehensible to onlookers from among the ordinary people. The latter are only able to enjoy the dialogue thanks to a pair of interpreters. According to their rôle in the play these interpreters are no more than servants, but to judge from their function within the whole they might better be called main characters. Apart from their interpreting they are virtuosi in the contriving and committing of buffoonery. Their pantomiming, clowning, and acrobatic feats, and their duels in repartee, arouse constant gales of hilarity. Their primary function, however, is to mediate between two worlds: *via* them the ordinary man shares in the dramatic art of the royal sphere. Their rôle is in a way symbolic of the interplay of cultural elements we have been considering in this section, further examples of which will be encountered in the following chapters.

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

MUSIC

THE VILLAGE ORCHESTRAS

533 Although we had heard enthusiastic reports about the splendid
● 545 music of Bali, its subtle beauty and vigour came to us as a revelation on our first night on the island. It is customary to hold a concert of Balinese music in the hotel gardens the night that the weekly boat arrives from Surabaya bringing new visitors. We had experienced disappointments on such occasions elsewhere and we were fully prepared to hear another of the denatured versions of native entertainment usually concocted for tourists. We distrusted the twenty-five or thirty young men who, nude above the waist and wearing sashes of blue silk, sat cross-legged around a square formed by impressive instruments in elaborate carved frames.

[534] There were metallophones, instruments with bronze keys like xylophones, sets of polished bronze bowls arranged from low to high like the notes of the scale, great bronze gongs, and many kinds of small cymbals. There were also two long drums wrapped in black and white chequered cloth.

Quietly, as if to indicate the piece to be played, someone started to beat out a tune on one of the high metallophones; others joined in, gradually increasing the volume of the playful melody, and soon they were all playing music the like of which we had never heard. It was a pure music like tinkling bells, interwoven with the fast humming of the cymbals, onomatopoetically called *tjéng-tjéng*, and punctuated here and there by booming gongs, the whole controlled by the masterful leadership of the two drummers, who, with the tips of their fingers, beat impossible rhythms on the double heads of their drums, each differently tuned. Suddenly, with a crash, they all struck a sonorous chord and stopped, all but the four boys playing on the *réyong*, who, in perfect unison and as if moved by a single impulse, beat the inverted bronze bowls with padded sticks, ringing out rippling

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

chords, sinuous melodies that broke at unexpected places into resonant accents or rolled into fast syncopation.

When the *réyong* solo was over, the rest joined in again, building up the themes until they reached a furious climax that faded away into the original theme, but enriched by rhapsodical ornamentation on the high instruments against the measured basses and occasional reverberations of the deep gongs. It was an Oriental ultra-modern Bach fugue, an astounding combination of bells, machinery, and thunder.

All of the pieces they played that evening were masterpieces of musical structure, simple, but rich and alive, violent and at the same time refined, having little in common with the spirit of the over-refined, somewhat precious music we had heard in Java.

The performance, we found out afterwards, was given by one of the finest *gamelans*, orchestras, in the island — the gong Belaluan, pride of the quarter of the town that was later to become our home. One of the leaders of the *gong* was Gusti Oka, the young prince who became our host. When he rented us part of his house, we went to bed every night to the music of the orchestra that rehearsed only a few doors away in the *balé bandjar*, the communal meeting hall of Belaluan.

The ambition of every *bandjar* is to own the best orchestra in the neighbourhood. It is only very poor and neglected communities that do not have two or three orchestras of their own to play for their feasts and ceremonies. As soon as they can afford it, after their temples are in good order, the most pressing need is to organize musical clubs, procure instruments, and train musicians. Every member of the village association takes an equal pride and interest in the *gamelan* and they contribute gladly, with labour and even with money, to obtain the expensive bronze gongs and bars, to make and carve the frames of the instruments, and to secure teachers to train the musicians. Often the villagers own the instruments of a former orchestra that has fallen into neglect and have to call upon outside orchestras for their feasts; but let them be spurned by a successful modern group in a rival

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

533 either approves or rejects the proposal, and there are no outbursts of artistic temperament.

The Balinese do not write down their music. I asked if it was not difficult to memorize such long and intricate compositions and was told that "when the piece has been rehearsed long

[516]

[826] enough, so that it has once entered into a man's liver, he plays it without thinking."

538 628 Often the group was visited by the leaders of famous orchestras from other villages who were invited as guests of the community to teach new compositions. The leaders of the gong Ringdikit from North Bali came to Belaluan to exchange pieces: while [184] they taught the dynamic and revolutionary style of the North, they learned the classical pieces of the South. The musicians of Belaluan, on the other hand, went to other villages to break in new organizations and were always lavishly entertained. Once in [545] our village we witnessed a contest between two famous gongs;

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

the rival orchestras were installed at either end of a large shed specially built for the occasion. A great crowd surrounded them. In the middle sat an impressive jury made up of the local princes and *pungawas*. The orchestras in turn played their best compositions while the audience remained silent. At the end the jurors went into deliberation and awarded the decision to the rival *gamelan*, who had come all the way from the district of Tabanan.

Despite the fact that there is no trace of Occidental influence in the music of Bali, even those who hear it for the first time are carried away by it. Musicians who have gone to Bali have become ardent admirers of Balinese music. Walter Spies was the first to take an interest in it and to write transcriptions, Leopold Stokowski wanted to bring a Balinese orchestra to America, and Colin McPhee has spent years in Bali compiling material and writing down the music. However, the laws of Balinese music are different from those of the West. There is in Balinese music a unified range of sonorities tending towards one sound; with the exception of certain bamboo xylophones, an incidental bamboo flute, or a two-string violin, all of the instruments are metals struck with mallets; there is a general tone-colour of metallic percussions — tinkling, acid sonorities that can be clashing and violent or soft and delicate, but are never sweet and plaintive. Their musical phraseology is simpler, more confined within a margin of sobriety, than our expansive and unrestrained music.

The Balinese have developed their music to the point of having a special type of orchestra for every purpose, each differing from the others in sonority, in the instruments composing it, in the pieces played, and even in scale. (The Balinese scale, with certain exceptions, consists of five notes, named from low to high: *ding, dong, deng, dung, dang*, corresponding to our E, F, G, B, C.) The "concert" orchestra is entirely different from the one used for feasts, cremations, and processions. The same holds true for the music employed for the various styles of plays and dances; the orchestra for marionette shadow-plays is radically different from the one used for the dances of young girls, which

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

533 the gambang is not exclusively Balinese is shown by the fact that there are reliefs in the East Javanese ruin of Tjandi Panataran depicting gambangs.

THE DANCE

A FOCUS OF BALINESE LIFE

535 Next to having good orchestras, a fine group of dancers is an almost organic need for the spiritual and physical life of the community. Besides the passion they show for their music and dancing and the important part these play in the ritual, to have a skilful and famous group of dancers brings pride and social prestige to the village ward, the *bandjar*. The young men of today are 177 fond of football games, but all other attempts to introduce foreign 517 amusements have failed in Bali. The rare movie shows in the two large towns are patronized almost exclusively by the foreign population, and not even the rich princes like phonographs, although there are excellent records of Balinese music. I do not know anyone who has a radio.

Balinese dancing is essentially for exhibition: dancing to enter- 535 tain an audience and for display of skill, a stage of development 545 that belongs to an advanced civilization, but that in Bali goes hand in hand with the ritual-magic dances characteristic of primitive peoples. Thus the survival of the primitive in a developed society, a characteristic of everything Balinese, shows itself in the dancing as well as in the general mode of life. In the religious dances the community amuses itself at the same time that it tries [785] to propitiate the gods and ward off evil spirits. There are even violent self-sacrificial dances in which the performers in a trance simulate self-torture with knives or walk on fire to appease the bloodthirsty evil spirits and to show their supernatural powers.

773 The Balinese attribute a divine origin to music and dancing. 535 It is said that Batara Gurú, the Supreme Teacher, invented the first instruments, and that Indra, the Lord of the Heavens, originated dancing when he created the incomparably beautiful *dedari*, the nymphs of heaven, to dance for the pleasure of the

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

171 dance of the higher order was dying until rescued in recent years
535 by the sultans, today it is only in the high courts of the Javanese princes that fine dancing can be seen. In Java the fine dancer is a specialist attached to the court, often a prince himself; in Bali he is an ordinary villager with talent and skill who performs for the prestige of his community and for the entertainment of his neighbours. In Bali as well as in Java, it is a part of the education of a prince to dance, act, and play musical instruments, but in Bali a prince who organizes a theatrical group mingles with the common people and performs for their amusement. It is amusing to hear the Javanese and the Balinese deride each other's theatre: the Balinese think the dances of Java are meaningless, dull, and dead, but the Javanese are shocked at the "noisy" music of Bali and look upon their dancing as the product of rude and primitive peasants.

The Balinese have constantly injected new life into their theatre, in contrast to the Javanese, who, perhaps because of Mohammedan influence, have allowed the art to come to a standstill so that their acting suggests imitation of the movements of their archaic marionette shows (*wayang purwa*). The Javanese actor cannot express emotion except by the most conventional gestures, and his face remains fixed and mask-like. The Balinese act in an exactly opposite manner. They are gay, exuberant, and fond of gestures and slapstick comedy. Javanese masks are stylized, with long, sharp noses and slit eyes that eliminate all sense of the realism frowned upon by Islamism. The Balinese make masks of amazing expressiveness, often realistic in character, studies of standard types. I have seen a masked play with masterfully carved masks that were caricatures of Chinese, Arabs, and Europeans.

A theatrical group is organized by the villagers into a society
545 along the same lines as a musical club. Contributions of money are made, instruments procured, and musicians trained. The
535 future dancers are selected from the boys and girls of the community, taking into consideration their pleasing personal appear-

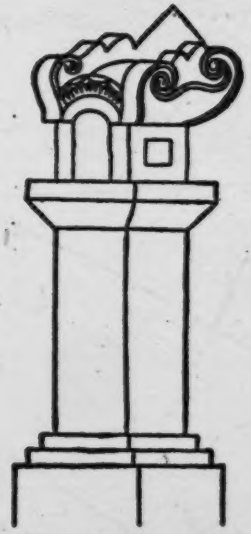
2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

535 The legs, however, are used with a minimum of importance in the dance, except for locomotion, and in certain sitting dances like the *kebiyar* are not used at all. It is said that such movements [857] are possible only because of the extreme youth of the dancers. It is true that a *legong* dancer retires at twelve or thirteen, or perhaps continues in another type of dance, and that a fully grown girl is often considered too big to dance, but there are old women [888] who are fine dancers and a good *baris* performer is usually a man past middle age. A solo dance often lasts more than an hour, and even children can dance incessantly for long periods of time without showing traces of exhaustion. This resistance often amazes travellers, but the Balinese explain that the dancer is unconscious of the real work and falls into a sort of self-induced trance where only the rhythm of the dance exists, and the dancer then moves in a world where fatigue is unknown. *Legong* dancers are very popular in the community; they are looked upon as people out of the ordinary and are exempt from heavy work. They have many suitors, and a prince frequently marries a *legong* dancer as soon as she becomes of age.

545 When a society has enough money for costumes and the dancers are ready to make a public appearance, the village association, on an auspicious day, gives an inauguration festival (*malaspasin*). The costumes are blessed before they can be worn for the [545] [782] first time, and the group makes offerings to launch the new organization successfully. An actor, a dancer, or a story-teller undergoes the same ceremony by which a priest or magician adds power to his soul. In the case of a dancer the ceremony is a magic purification and beautification in which a priest with the stem of a flower inscribes magic syllables on the face, head, tongue, and members of the future dancer to make him attractive to the eyes of his public. It is not only on this occasion that dancers pray for success; before every performance they make small offerings to the deities of the dance, Dewa Pergina, and to the nymphs of [776] heaven, the *dedari* Supraba and Tilotama. In the temple *Mer*- [778] *tasari* in Semawang (near Sanur) there is a small stone shrine

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

shaped like a dancing helmet (*gelunggan*), and often *legong* dancers go there to deposit offerings. Once a year, a day (*tumpak wayang*) is dedicated to the theatre, when all theatrical accessories, the costumes, masks, and marionettes as well as musical instruments, receive offerings, perhaps to restore their original



Shrine with Dancing Headdress in the Temple Mertasari in Semawang

effectiveness. On this day theatrical organizations all over the island give feasts, but no performance of any kind is permitted. There is also a day when literary manuscripts receive offerings; the day is dedicated to Saraswati, goddess of learning, science, and literature, when no one may read.

The size of the crowd is the only indication of whether a performance is successful or not. The Balinese do not applaud or show their appreciation of a performer in any other way. This seeming lack of encouragement does not influence the enthusiasm for the art, and it is my impression that the dance and the theatre of today are even more developed than in the past. Judg-

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

545 ing from old reports, it seems that there are more performances, the shows are more elaborate and varied, and their are many new styles besides that of the jealously preserved classic theatre. There is hardly a village that does not have some sort of dancing organization, and even the fact that the old custom of exempting [651] actors and musicians from payment of taxes has been abolished by the Government has not diminished interest in dancing and acting. There is not even the incentive of commercial gain for the individual; the small amounts received at private festivals go to the society's fund for new costumes, new instruments, and the communal feasts.

THE LEGONG

535 As the archetype of the delicate and feminine, the *legong* is the finest of Balinese dances. Connoisseurs discuss the comparative excellence of various *legongs* as intensely as we discuss our dancers, and I have heard solemn arguments among princes as to whether the group of Bedulu was finer than that of Saba, or the school of Sukawati superior to that of Badung.

535 The *legong* is performed at feasts, generally in the late after-
545 noon when the heat of the day has subsided. At the first rumour that there is going to be a *legong* in the central square or, if it is at a private feast, in the middle of the street, the crowd begins to gather. Women and children come first to secure the best places, crowding around a long, rectangular space left free for the dance. The dancing-space is often decorated with a canopy of palm-leaf streamers or shaded by an awning of black, red, and white cloth, the tail of one of the giant kites. On one end of the " stage " the orchestra entertains the gradually growing crowd with preludes until it is time for the show to begin.

535 Three little dancers, with an air of infinite boredom, sit on
292 mats in front of the orchestra. They are dressed from head to foot in silk overlaid with glittering goldleaf and on their heads they wear great helmets of gold ornamented with rows of fresh frangipani blossoms. Enormous ear-plugs of gold, an inch in

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

292 535 tight, corset-like binding gives line to the dancers' bodies and supports their backs. The costume is completed by a stiff short vest of tooled and gilt leather worn over the shoulders, a collar set with coloured stones and little mirrors, a silver belt, and scarfs and ornaments of tooled leather hanging from each hip. The little girl who sits between the *legongs*, the *tjondong*, their attendant, is dressed in simpler clothes.

545 535 When a large enough crowd has assembled, the orchestra begins the dance music and the *tjondong* gets up lazily and stands in the middle of the dancing-space. Suddenly, at an accent from the orchestra, as if pierced by an electric current, she strikes an intense pose: with her bare feet flat on the ground, her knees flexed, she begins a lively dance, moving briskly, winding in and out of a circle, with an arm rigidly outstretched, fingers tense and trembling, and her eyes staring into space. At each accent of the music the whole body of the *tjondong* jerks; she stamps her foot, which quivers faster and faster, the vibration spreading to her thigh and up her hips until the entire body shakes so violently that the flowers of her head-dress fly in all directions. The gradually growing spell breaks off unexpectedly and the girl glides with swift side-steps, first to the right, then to the left, swaying from her flexible waist while her arms break into sharp patterns at the wrists and elbows. Without stopping, she picks up two fans that lie on the mat and continues dancing with one in each hand, in an elegant winding stride.

At a cue from the music, the two other girls straighten up and begin to dance with their hands, neck, and eyes, still kneeling on the mat. Then they rise and dance with the *tjondong*, forming intricate patterns with six arms and thirty fingers until the musical theme ends. Then the *tjondong* hands a fan to each of the *legongs* and retires into the background.

The orchestra plays a more vigorous melody and the *legongs* dance again, with the open fans fluttering at such a speed that their outline is lost like the wings of a humming-bird flying suspended in space. The two dancers seem the double image of one,

[pages 226 (A) through 226 (C) appear here; text continues on page 227. – Analyst

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

so much alike are their movements, their necks snap from side to side in such perfect accord, synchronized in double time to the flashes of their eyes. The most absolute discipline controls their sharp, accurate movements. Each motion follows the last in perfect rhythmic sequence, technical perfection transformed into beauty and style. At times the music becomes playful and delicate; the two girls come together, bringing their faces close to each other and delicately "rubbing noses" (*ngarás*), following this by a flutter of the shoulders, a thrill of pleasure. This represents a love scene, a kiss, done to a special musical theme (*pengipuk*).

After a pause the orchestra plays the *Lasem* theme and the actual play begins. The story is based on an episode from the *Malat*, the Balinese *Thousand and One Nights*, in which Princess Rangkesari is stolen by the arrogant King Lasem, her despised suitor, while he is waging war against her father. Rangkesari spurns Lasem's advances even after he promises to give up the war if she will yield to him. He threatens to kill her father, but still she will not submit. Enraged, the king goes to carry out his threat, but during the battle that ensues, a blackbird flies in front of him, a bad omen, and Lasem is killed.

The dancers enact the various characters of the story that everyone in the audience knows by heart. The acting of the *legong* is abstract pantomime with such stylized action and economy of gesture that it becomes merely a danced interpretation of the literary text, which is recited by a story-teller, who chants the episodes and dialogues while the dance is in progress.

The dancer who plays Lasem enters, followed by Rangkesari (the two *legongs*). Lasem, tugging at her skirt, tries to force the princess, but she strikes him with her fan. This is repeated until Lasem grows impatient and, after a struggle, retires enraged. The princess is left alone, wiping her tears with the edge of her apron and slapping her thigh with a fan, a gesture of grief. As the girl kneels, Lasem reappears, angry and defiant, on his way to continue the war against Rangkesari's father; the closed fan

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

535 545 becomes a kris which he points threateningly at his imaginary enemy. In the following episode the attendant, the *tjondong*, puts on her arms a pair of golden wings made of leather, to portray the unlucky crow; she dances sitting on the ground, fluttering her wings with lightning speed, advancing on her knees with birdlike leaps, and beating the earth with her wings. Lasem hesitates for a moment at sight of the ominous bird, but goes on with his kris drawn; the bird dashes at him, obstructing his progress and hampering him in the battle. The dramatic end of the episode is left to the imagination, and the three little girls end with a relaxed dance of farewell. The performance has lasted well over an hour and at the end the girls appear perfectly calm, unfatigued after their strenuous dance.

From the treatment of the story, conventional dance formulas to represent actions and emotions explained by a story-teller, one could deduce that the *legong* is an elaboration of the archaic shadow-plays, the *wayang kulit*. It hints at an attempt by human beings to perform dramatic stories like those played by marionettes, as is perhaps the case of the Javanese *wayang wong* — "human *wayang*" — or actors that play in the *wayang* style. It is interesting to note that while the old records speak of other forms of Balinese theatre, no mention is made of the *legong*, which may not, after all, be an ancient dance.

535 832 A very popular dance that seems related to the *legong* is the *djogéd*, performed by a girl in a variation of the *legong* costume and in the traditional *legong* steps. The dance is considered erotic by the Balinese because the girl entices the men from the audience by "making eyes" at them during the course of the dance. The man invited must dance with her in postures that represent a love game of approach and refusal (*nibing*), in which the man tries to come near enough to the girl's face to catch her perfume and feel the warmth of her skin, the Balinese form of a kiss. As the audience becomes worked up, other men "cut in" and dance with her. I have seen performances of *djogéd* that had

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

535 The characteristic part of the *baris* costume is the head-dress with
292 its high triangle of white cloth (*udeng-udengan*), worn at the back of the head, and a diadem of fresh *tjempaka* flowers in the front, set in wires and arranged in rows, ending in spirals at each side of the head. The dancer of *baris pendét* wears skin-tight trousers (*djalér*) and a little coat with tight sleeves (*kwatjí*). Over his breast a scarf (*umpal*) is tied, and from it hang many narrow strips (*lelantjar*) of cloth overlaid with goldleaf, giving the dancer the aspect of an enormous gilt cabbage. On his back he wears a kris with gold handle. The word *baris* means "in line," "military formation."

THE KEBIYAR

535 Individualism is not encouraged in the essentially communal
555 Balinese society, but from time to time the genius of an artist
159 breaks through the conventional mould and emerges as a powerful personal influence. Some years ago a young man of humble birth startled South Bali with a new dance which combined the rugged manliness of the heroic dances (*baris*) with the delicacy of the *legong*. Its novelty consisted in the fact that the dancer never raised himself from the ground, moving only from the waist up, giving greater emphasis to the movements of the torso, arms, and hands and focusing attention on the dancer's facial expression. In using his body like a sensitive musical instrument, the young dancer interpreted even the most delicate moods of the island's finest orchestra, the *gong* Pangkung of Tabanan. Eventually he joined the *gong* Belaluan, and his fame spread to the foreign visitors on the island. The name of Mario became as well known to the world traveller as that of Mei Lan-Fang, Shan Kar, or Escudero.

535 At the regular weekly concerts of the Belaluan *gong* given at
545 the hotel, Mario sat cross-legged in the centre of a square formed by the instruments of the orchestra. He was dressed in a long
[292] piece of brocade wrapped around his waist like a skirt, with one end trailing on the ground, and a sash of gilt cloth bound his torso. Jasmine and *tjempaka* flowers were stuck in his small turban, and over his left ear he wore a trembling great hibiscus

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

of hammered gold mounted on springs. In his right hand he held a brocade fan. He sat there motionless, in concentrated intensity, until at a signal from the drummers the orchestra struck a sudden crashing chord. Mario straightened like a startled cobra, tense and nervous, holding the fan over his head as if to shade his eyes. The opening theme was fast and furious,

[292]

Mario Dancing *Kebiyar*

and Mario began to dance, waving his fan energetically, darting glances from side to side as if at an imaginary enemy. The tempo increased to a frantic climax, broken suddenly by a melodious solo on the *reyong*. Mario relaxed and danced delicately, his expression softened, and his movements became languid. With half-closed eyes he swayed from left to right, his elbows almost touching the mat, fanning himself or deftly arranging the flowers on his head-dress with quivering fingers. The high keys introduced the main theme; Mario flung his train to one side and hopped on his crossed legs around the square, bobbing up and down. In a coquettish mood he paused in front of the musicians, a smile on his face and his head jerking from side to side, finally centring his attention on the leading drummer, who,

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

535 captivated by the infectious rhythm, beat his drum, furiously
545 swaying and shaking to Mario's movements. Throughout the dance there were sharp contrasts, changing moods that followed the music, alternating "strong" motives with amorous, playful ones, the dancer wriggling like a trained cobra, swaying in a way that recalled the dance of a praying mantis to fascinate its prey, or stiffening with commanding elegance.

159 We became great admirers of Mario and never missed his
123 Friday performance. We even bought picture postcards of him which we tacked on the wall. One day a serious young man with a flower over his ear and his pink shirt-tails out came to the house to see Gusti, the orchestra leader and our host. He bowed politely and sat down to wait. After a short while I went into the house and found Gusti's old aunt trying eagerly to say something to me in Balinese, which in those days we had not learned to understand. She repeated the phrase over and over, each time pointing first to the postcard on the wall, then to the veranda, until it dawned on me that our visitor was the dancer Mario. After that we became close friends, and when he came from Tabanan he spent a good deal of his time with us. One day Mario did not come; someone said he was very ill, so we went to Tabanan and brought him to the Dutch doctor in Den Pasar. The doctor forbade him to dance and he was ordered to the hospital. Twice he ran away to Tabanan because he missed his wife and also because he would not drink milk. We went again to Tabanan and brought her along and arrangements were made so she could stay at the hospital to take care of Mario and so that he could have *bubur*, rice porridge, instead of milk. After leaving Bali we had word occasionally that he had not improved and had been sent to a specialist in Java. Mario never danced again. On our return to Bali two years later, he was still in a Surabaya hospital, and although some months later he came back, partly cured, he was unable to ever dance again and is now teaching dancing in Tabanan.

535 Interest in *kebiyar* waned after Mario's illness. To dance the

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

tage of this form of expression to propagandize religion and 536
adapted the stories of Hindu mythology into dramatic performances for the masses, illustrating the episodes of the life of Rama and Ardjuna with marionettes. As the popularity of the *wayang* grew, it became stylized theatre with a moral lesson, but it has never lost its mystic function. A performance of *wayang* is prescribed in ceremonials at important stages of the life of the Balinese like children's anniversaries, the coming of age of girls, teeth-filings, marriages, cremations, and temple feasts. The *wayang* may be performed in the daytime, without a screen and without an audience, but with a specified story, as magic support to the ceremony. Hardly a night goes by when the fluid music of the *wayang* cannot be heard somewhere. The fantastic adventures of the little leather puppets have a powerful hold on the imagination of young and old alike, who seem to prefer a *wayang* show to the more spectacular performance by human beings.

Travellers watching a shadow-play become bored after a short 536
time and cannot understand why the great crowds sit listening 545
with profound attention to the plays that do not end till dawn. 869
But to the Balinese the *wayang* is more than vague shadows on a screen. It is the medium of their classical poetry, for their ribald humour; and, most important of all, it is the greatest factor in the spiritual education of the masses. In a performance given by an inspired story-teller, there prevails the curious mixture of mysticism and of slapstick humour that the Balinese love [522]
so. Every object and every move of the marionettes has a symbolical significance aside from the purely entertaining aspect of the show. The *dalang* is an artist and a great spiritual teacher. Years of training, a thorough knowledge of the stories and their moral value, are required of a good *dalang*. His popularity depends on his inspiration, his humour, and his ability to handle the marionettes while he improvises comic dialogues. But his reputation also depends on his *sakti*, his magic power. He is invariably the star of the show.

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

536 Before the *dalang* can perform publicly, he must be ordained
545 by a priest in the *mawinten* ceremony, when mystic syllables are inscribed on his tongue with the stem of a *tjempaka* flower dipped in honey. Then he can perform the magic *tjalonarang* and may wear the knot (*prutjut*) worn on the hair by priests.

There are no announcements made when a *wayang* show is [202] to take place. Somehow the rumour spreads from person to person and there is a crowd even before the *dalang* arrives. By the time he begins to stretch his screen, a great mob has gathered, sitting quietly on the ground, giving no signs of impatience at the customary endless wait for the play to begin. It seems as if they deliberately waited until midnight to start, timing the show to end at dawn. Women and children sit in the front ranks facing the screen, the men are divided between the last rows and "backstage," the side of the screen where the *dalang* [562] sits, where they can watch the actual puppets. In Java it is a rule that the men look at the puppets, while the women see only the shadows.

The screen (*kelir*) is a piece of white cloth stretched on a wooden frame and lit by a primitive oil lamp (*damar*) that hangs directly above the *dalang*'s head. The shadows are thrown on this screen by means of the lamp. At the foot of the screen is a section of the soft trunk of a banana tree, where the supports of the marionettes are stuck to hold them in position when they are not in motion. The *dalang* sits cross-legged next to a long, coffin-shaped wooden chest (*kropak*), where he keeps his puppets. Behind the *dalang* is the orchestra, the *gendér wayang*, [534] four xylophones, each played by a musician. Between the toes of his right foot, the *dalang* holds a piece of horn, a hammer, with which he knocks out rhythms on the wooden chest — indications to the orchestra.

When everything is ready, at the tock-tock of the *dalang*'s toe-hammer, the orchestra begins to play the delicate, watery music of the *wayang*, rich tone-colours and suspended tempos like bells and fountains playing a Debussian melody. A strange

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

shadow appears suddenly on the screen. It is a leaf-shaped silhouette in which the trunk, branches, and leaves of a tree can be distinguished. There are various theories as to its significance; it may represent a mountain, a forest, the Tree of Life, or the gate to the Supernatural; but in Bali it is simply called *kayon*, a tree, or *babad*, the story. The mysterious shadow sways in circles and waves to the compass of the music, its trembling shape distorted and thrown in and out of focus by the flickering flame of the lamp, until it stops and is fixed motionless in the middle of the screen. Whatever mystic significance the *kayon* may once have had, it is now only the link that connects the various parts of the play; standing still in the centre of the screen it indicates the beginning and the end; by its motions or by the angle at which it is set it may show the mood of the scene to follow or represent wind, fire, water.

When the *kayon* is removed, the *dalang* brings the marionettes out of the chest, one by one, taking his time to introduce the characters. The shadows of each puppet are fixed on the screen by sticking the ends of their support into the banana stem. On the right the *dalang* places the good and noble characters: the gods, kings, princes, princesses, and their attendants. On the left the evil characters are lined up: giants, demons, witches, and the villains of the play in general. The puppets are lacy silhouettes in profile, delicately cut out of buffalo parchment and beautifully painted. They are handled by three long supports of horn or bamboo, one for the body and one for each arm. Only their arms are jointed, and their acting is reduced to rhythmical arm gestures, while the *dalang* recites their lines. In Bali, but not in Java, some comic characters can move the lower jaw.

The puppets are then removed, leaving the screen empty, and the play begins. It may be the episode from the *Ramayana* in which the divine prince Rama tries to rescue Sita, his beloved bride, from the clutches of the giant Rawana, the *raksasa* king, a monster of wickedness and lechery. Here Rama is assisted by

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

536 ous styles of classic plays, each with its own technique, and with special stories and costumes. For instance, episodes from the Ramayana are played only in *wayang wong* style (perhaps a development from the shadow-plays) in which masked actors in elaborate costumes enact the struggle between Rama and Ra-

[532]

Semar, as Twalén is Called in the Ancient *Wayang Gambúh*

wana, while the rowdy monkeys play tricks on each other and the clowns Twalén and Délam provide hilarious comedy. The
[533] music of the *wayang wong* is, like that for the shadow-plays, mellow and delicate, played by the same *gendérs* augmented by drums and gongs to provide dramatic accents. The human *wayang* is not, however, as popular today as the shadow *wayang* and is rarely played.

545 The romantic and heroic adventures of Pandji, the native
536 Ardjuna, the dashing young prince of the *Malat* stories, are

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

played in the *gambúh*, the ancestor of the Balinese opera. The *gambúh* is played by middle-aged actors who represent kings and prime ministers, singing and chanting long Kawi recitatives to the accompaniment of great bamboo flutes or a two-stringed violin, and drums and cymbals. The style of singing *gambúh* is curiously dissonant and archaic, with great contrasts of deep voices mingled with high falsettos, whines, and loud cries that grow into a jumbled chorus at the exciting moments of the play. There are other classic plays, more or less in the style of the *gambúh*, but with their own stories, such as the *tantri*, *tjupak*, and so forth.

A great favourite is the famous *Ardjuna Wiwaha*, one of the *Kawi* classics, a masterpiece of romantic poetry, but when played in the *baris pendet*, it becomes a mixture of love story and rough-house. The favourite episode of the Balinese is the one in which Ardjuna, in deep meditation on a mountain top, seeks to obtain a divine weapon with which to vanquish the demon Deyta Wata Kewatja, who has insulted the gods by demanding that the most beautiful *dedari*, the nymph Supraba, be given to him in marriage. The long penance of Ardjuna worries the gods, who decide to send the most beautiful *dedari* to bring him out of his abstraction so that he may help them to make war against the demon. The nymphs find him in a deep trance and all immediately fall in love with him. They display their charms and employ every artifice to attract his attention, but they cannot break his penance.

In the play the main *baris* dancer sits with closed eyes and hands clasped in an attitude of prayer while his *patih* and Kertalah make poor attempts at meditation. Two beautiful girls appear; they are Supraba and Tilotama, the nymphs, who dance in front of him, embracing and kissing Ardjuna, who remains unmoved, while the clowns appear indignant at his indifference. The *dedari* go away broken-hearted, when suddenly a blood-curdling roar is heard off-stage. The clowns are paralysed with fear. A monster with the head of a wild pig leaps into the arena.

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

after them, chasing them far into the road, and if he captures one, carries him back to the dancing-place and gives the money to his frightened victim. I asked repeatedly for the significance of this curious character, but I never received a satisfactory explanation. The *pengedjokan's* other names are Djero Dalam Pegék and Djero Dalam Truna (*truna:* bachelor), perhaps derived from some authentic character, a bachelor king of legend who liked children, but frightened them because of his appearance. To be a bachelor after middle age is considered abnormal in Bali. The mask is very holy, or rather has magic power, and no one would dream of selling it. In general a good set of *topéng* masks is a treasure, since only the bests sculptors can make them. Learned Balinese have a high regard for the *topéng* as an art.

536 858 [589] [532]

THE BALINESE OPERA: THE ARDJA

536 545

A performance by a good *ardja* ensemble is a social event in the village. It is at *ardja* shows that young people meet and love affairs are started, helped by the romantic atmosphere of the love stories and the late hours. The performance never begins before midnight, and the villagers wait patiently, gossiping, flirting, listening to music, or munching peanuts until the actors have eaten their interminable dinner and are finally dressed.

[584]

The play begins with the appearance of the *tjondong*, the female attendant of the *putri*, the eternal princess. The part of the *tjondong* is usually played by a middle-aged, homely, male actor dressed as a girl, who walks in an effeminate way, singing praises to his mistress and begging her to come out. She is finally persuaded; the curtains of the little booth at the end of the dancing-space part and the much heralded beauty appears. In progressive *ardjas* she may be a young girl dressed in gold, with a great flower head-dress; but generally beautiful young girls cannot sing very well and in "good" *ardjas* the part is played by a male actor famous for his high falsetto. Slowly the two work their way across the stage, dancing and posturing, the

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

servant occasionally kneeling before the princess, all the while singing and talking in high, wailing voices. After this, they go "off-stage" simply by sitting on a mat in front of the orchestra.

Deep hollow laughter is heard from behind the curtain, followed by a song announcing the *patih*, the prime minister of the great prince, the hero of the play. The *patih* draws back the curtain and after what seems like unsuccessful attempts to come out, he finally emerges, very impressive and sure of his importance. He struts and grins, singing his own praises, laughing pompously. His abused and browbeaten younger brother Kertalah comes out meekly after him. He is a pitiful little figure dressed in an old football sweater and what look like the old clothes of the *patih*. Instead of a gold kris, he carries a stick or some sort of agricultural implement. His face is crossed with dabs of white paint over his nose and upper lip to indicate that he is a clown. They hold long dialogues, giving hints of the story to follow. The *patih* in his hollow, pretentious manner postures and struts like a turkey; Kertalah lisps or stutters. They joke about topical and local matters, much in the style of circus clowns, with the *patih* playing "straight" and acting as foil for the clown. They are the favourites of the crowd and every time an "off-colour" joke is made, it is the women and children who laugh the loudest, while the men blush.

Finally it is time for the prince, the *ratú*, to appear; the *patih* recites his praises and with clasped hands begs him to enter. He describes the prince's beauty as contrasted with his own ugliness, and flatters him, in standard phrases such as: "I am so happy to be the *patih* of such a prince, ha, ha, ha! Come out, Excellency, the road is clear, please come out, I wait for my master."

The prince appears, glittering with gold and tinsel, singing in kawi, dancing in the refined style. The *patih* and Kertalah follow every one of his gestures in awe, trying to imitate them, but succeeding only in a burlesque. By now it is about three in the morning and time for the story to begin. The *ardja* stories

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

545
292

Princess and Attendant — a Scene from
the Ardja, Balinese Opera

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

are romantic episodes of memorable love affairs of princes and princesses, generally full of fantastic situations and with a distinct erotic flavour. The distinguished characters speak and sing in kawi, which is translated into common Balinese by the comedians for the benefit of the unscholarly crowd. The comedy is incredibly funny and rough slapstick, sprinkled with all sorts of bawdy jokes.

Besides the traditional stories, there are popular new plays such as *Sampik* and *Tuan Wei*, adaptations of Chinese love stories that started in 1924 as bastard performances with actors in European clothes playing on mandolins. Eventually these stories became thoroughly Balinese and were incorporated in the *ardja*.

THE DJANGER

An inevitable sight for the newly arrived tourist every Saturday morning was the *djanger*. Under the hanging roots of a great *waringing*, or banyan tree, in the central square of the village, sat a dozen boys and a dozen girls in groups of six, forming a square, the girls facing the girls, the boys opposite each other; a dance master, the *daag*, sat in the centre. The boys wore blue sashes and red hibiscus over their ears; the girls had great fan-shaped head-dresses of flowers and were wrapped in gilt cloth from the armpits to the feet. The boys shouted and shook while the girls sang with baby voices, flinging their hands and flashing their eyes. After a while a girl appeared dressed as a prince, singing and posturing, quarrelling with a wild-looking bird, an actor with a frightful mask, wings, and a bright-coloured tail. The show ended with the death of the bird, shot by an arrow of the prince. Half of the tourists looked on, while the other half snapped pictures furiously. The performance was picturesque and justified the fee, but somehow it did not ring true. Despite the fact that the elaborate show was held on the open road, it attracted only a few children, and the dancers seemed bored and indifferent.

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

535 545 883 On our first night in Bali, strolling on the outskirts of Den Pasar, we heard again the same syncopated, persistent beat of drums and gongs we had heard in the morning. Following the sound, we came upon a great crowd watching a show, and after a good deal of pushing, we managed to make our way to the front rows. There were the dancers of the morning, but it was the *djanger* for the Balinese. Instead of tourists comfortably seated on folding chairs, the nude torsos of a great mob of eager people pressed us on all sides until we could not move a hand and were nearly suffocated by the constant blast of human breath, overpowered with heat and the heavy perfumes that emanated from the dense crowd. Children climbed on walls and trees or crawled over our feet, trying desperately to see something. Instead of the "traditional" costume worn for [292] [177] tourists, the girls wore tight chiffon blouses, their flower crowns framing their heavily powdered faces. The boys were dressed in European shirts, neckties, shorts, golf socks, and football shoes. Over their shoulders they wore a sort of chasuble of black velvet with appliqués of gold braid, spangles, and epaulets of gold fringe. They had red flowers on their bare heads and incongruous false moustaches on their chalky faces. Only the dance master wore the usual theatrical costume of brocade, but with an added shirt and bow tie. Like the others he wore a huge moustache.

We never discovered the purpose behind the absurd costume; perhaps it was only fun, perhaps to caricature Europeans. But the insanity of the costume was surpassed by that of the performance: to the serpentine melody of a bamboo flute and the [533] syncopated beat of drums and gongs, the girls sang nonsensical songs about flowers, rice cakes, and so forth, many words without meaning, simply to create rhythm: "djange – djange – djangerere . . ." while their hands flew, the flowers on their head shook, and their eyes snapped in unison with their necks. The boys, the *ketjak*, swayed and shook, shouting: "Ketjakketjakketjak – tjak! tjipo – oh! tjipo – oh! a-ha-aha!" much in the

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

manner of a college yell, but growing faster and faster, underlining the tempo of the gongs and drums. The dance master darted wild glances in all directions with gestures of anger and astonishment, moving like a frantic automaton. The whole moved with the rhythm of a locomotive at full speed – Balinese jazz that intoxicated both performers and audience in a spell of

[292]

Ketjaks in a *Djanger* Performance

syncopated movement. At calmer moments two girls stepped out of the ranks and danced around the dance master, who registered amazement when the girls made love to him. Then the most incongruous nonsense ensued: like a flash, the *ketjaks* jumped to their feet in acrobatic poses, athletic pyramids, a boy in a back-bend while another stood on his chest. They climbed on each other's shoulders, shaking and shouting. Suddenly the dance master whirled on his seat as if he could not stand it any longer, and yelled: "*Daaag!*" The whole show stopped dead. After a pause the play began, an *ardja* story with the usual princes, prime ministers, and clowns.

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

535 Later I found out that the *djanger* was a recent development.
● 545 It had started suddenly, when, about 1925, the first company of
177 Malay operettas (*stambul*) visited the island. The Balinese immediately created their own version of the pantomime, and the *djanger* spread like an epidemic; everywhere *djanger* groups were formed and soon every *bandjar* could boast a *djanger* club. It was the first time that boys and girls joined to dance for the fun of performing together, their first social dance. Every district developed its own style. In Buleleng there was a group in which the girls wore shorts, showing their legs, a rather shocking exhibition for the Balinese, who called it *djanger melalong*, the "naked djanger," but it was popular among the rich Chinese of Buleleng. The *djanger* was then the most popular entertainment. Nobody cared to see anything else and every girl in Bali hoped to become a *djanger* and hummed the songs all day. We feared that the *djanger* would kill other forms of Balinese dancing, but on our return two years later, we were surprised to find that there was no more *djanger;* all the famous groups had stopped. Some of the girls had married, and since there was no more demand, the groups were not reorganized. The most exhilarating show of the Balinese was dead and forgotten. Only a sleepy group remained: the *djanger* for the tourists, still avidly photographing what they called "temple dancers."

536 With the passing of the *djanger*, the classical forms of theatre
177 regained popularity, and during our second visit it was the *ardja*
545 that had again become the favourite. The style of the *djanger* was a puzzling departure from the refinement of the Balinese theatre. The singing was obviously derived from the magic *sanghyang* songs, and the costumes and acrobatic figures might have been copied from the Westernized Malay shows, but the general mood, the seating arrangements, and the movements can only be explained as a throw-back to the Polynesian spirit.

177 The case of the *djanger* was an interesting example of the atti-
517 tude of the Balinese towards their arts: their love of novelty and

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

CHAPTER X

WITCHCRAFT

WITCHES, WITCH-DOCTORS, AND THE MAGIC THEATRE

●545 A performance of *wayang kulit*, the shadow-play, is such an ordinary occurrence in Den Pasar that it was unusual and intriguing one evening to find the town aroused by news of a shadow-play to take place that night in the outskirts, and we tagged along with the Balinese members of our household to watch the show. The streets were filled with people from the neighbouring villages, all going our way, and we found the open square of Pemetjutan, where the show was already in progress, jammed with an eager crowd trying to push their way within hearing-distance of the little screen, a focus of flickering light for a restless, dark sea of human heads.

We were accustomed to see sober groups sitting quietly even at performances of the most famous story-tellers, but on this occasion the crowd was so great that we could not approach the screen near enough even to distinguish clearly the shadows of the leather puppets. So unusual was the sudden interest in the performance that the high-collared, helmeted Dutch officials, ordinarily unconcerned with the "nonsense of the natives," asked nervous questions among the crowd. Everything in the performance went on as usual, except for a line of Balinese characters painted across the screen which said: "I, Ida Bagus

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

Ktut, dare to tell." . . . We inquired what he dared to tell 545
and from various sources we pieced together the following story:

For many months a feud had raged between two enemy factions of *leyaks*, witches, the spirits of living people given to black magic. This everybody knew because in Pemetjutan the *leyaks* in battle were seen every night in the form of blue flames darting among the coconut trees. The villagers fell sick by the score and many died suddenly of mysterious, unexplained deaths, but the wounds that had killed them became evident if the bodies were washed with specially blessed coconut water. The leader of one faction of witches was a well-known dealer in coffee, a woman of low caste named Makatjung, famous for her strong character and her natural magic powers. Her child had suddenly died, and in her despair Makatjung refused to leave his grave; night came and she fell asleep over it. In a dream the child spoke to her and blamed for his death a princess of Djerokuta, also reputed in the neighbourhood to be a powerful witch. Mad with rage, Makatjung went to the princess and accused her of the murder of her child. The princess did not deny it, and the *leyak* war was on. 545 627 754

It was supposed that the tide had turned against the faction of the noblewoman, and Matakjung, to make her victory known to the public, had engaged the daring story-teller to re-enact the events in a *wayang* performance and give out the names of her enemy's allies. To add to the suspense, it was rumoured that the story-teller, the son of Badung's most famous witch-doctor, had stolen the names he was about to make public from his father's records of clients for formulas of witchcraft. Everybody had gathered to learn the names of the village's *leyaks*, whispering advance guesses, and many were in fear of being named. The show dragged on through the night and we did not stay for the outcome. The next day people were reluctant to talk about it and someone remarked indignantly that it was wicked to make public accusations in this manner. We heard no more of the feud until three years later when we assisted at the cremation of

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

545 627 754 the princess of Djerokuta, believed by everybody to have been killed by the superior magic of the low-caste Makatjung.

75 541 A Balinese prince well known for his eccentric intrigues once announced he was to give a demonstration of how a man became a *leyak* and invited the entire foreign population of Bali to witness the phenomena. He seemed particularly anxious to attract even the casual tourists that came to the Bali Hotel. On the appointed night not only the Government officials, tourists, and illustrious Balinese had congregated in the darkness of the cemetery, but a great rowdy crowd of Balinese who had heard the rumour had gathered, equally curious, although less skeptical of the supernatural performance than the whites. They climbed trees, tearing branches and flashing lights into each other's faces, until the infuriated prince banned all flashlights. The prince's motive came out clearly when before starting the demonstration, he asked the guests for a contribution of one guilder and twenty cents to pay for the offerings that had to be made, should the man succeed in becoming a *leyak*.

After an endless wait the crowd gasped when a greenish light became visible at one end of the graveyard. As it approached it looked more and more suspiciously like a piece of banana leaf with a light behind it. A Dutch official next to me, who had retained his flashlight, aimed it suddenly at the ghost, who disappeared behind the low mound of a convenient new grave. The undaunted prince contended indignantly that the *leyak* was frightened and would not appear again, so he did not collect the fee. Thus ended our only opportunity to make the acquaintance of a *leyak*.

754 The existence of these *leyaks* is to the Balinese an incontestable fact. They are held responsible for most of the evils that afflict Bali, including sickness and death. Like the vampire, they suck the blood of sleeping people and are particularly fond of the entrails of unborn children. Every Balinese has stories

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

754 play, but always stop before the point where the tide turned
536 against the witch.

THE TJALON ARANG PLAY

● 545 It is in a performance of *Tjalon Arang*, the legend of Rangda,
754 that the Balinese theatre reaches the height of its magnificence. It combines the fine music and delicate dancing of the *legong* with the elaborate staging, the acting, singing, and comedy of the classic plays, besides the element of mystery and suspense.

The *Tjalon Arang* is not an ordinary play, but a powerful
[755] exorcism against *leyaks*, because by dramatizing Rangda's triumphs, the Balinese aim to gain her good will. Preparations for staging the great show start days before; it is essential that a "male" papaya tree, which bears no fruit, be first transplanted from the wilds to the middle of the dancing-grounds, because such a tree is the favourite haunt of the *leyaks*. A tall house on stilts is built at one end for Rangda, reached by a high runway of bamboo, flanked by spears, pennants, and umbrellas, all symbols of state. The entire dancing-space is covered by a canopy of streamers made of palm-leaf and tissue-paper flags; as many petrol lamps as are available in the village light the stage.

By midnight the audience is assembled, waiting patiently, listening to the special *Tjalon Arang* music, perhaps the finest in Bali, played by a full *legong* orchestra augmented with large bamboo flutes. A full moon is propitious for the performance
[82] and the company waits until the moon comes out from behind the black clouds, silhouetting the temple roofs, the palm trees, and the long aerial roots of the village banyan tree, a hanging black curtain of long tentacles against the sky, the perfect setting for the magic play. Offerings are made beforehand and consultations are held so as not to offend Rangda and to ascertain whether it is safe to hold the performance.

The show begins after midnight and lasts until dawn, when the witch makes her appearance. The play approaches our dramatic literature more nearly than anything else in Bali. It relates

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

the episodes of the struggle between Rangda and the great Erlangga. Dancing interludes by six little girls, the pupils of the witch, alternate with slapstick, the encounters of the king's subjects with *leyaks*, and with dramatic songs by the prince sent to kill Rangda. She is impersonated by an old actor gifted with such great powers that he is able to withstand, in his own body, the dangerous spirit of the witch herself.

Towards dawn the atmosphere becomes surcharged with mystery as the old actor goes into Rangda's house to enter into the trance. Watchmen are appointed to wake all the children that have fallen asleep lest their tender souls be harmed; a priest stands ready to conjure Rangda, who will make her triumphal appearance at the end of the play. A flickering lamp can be seen through the curtains of the house, and there is an occasional groan from the actor as he undergoes the painful transformation. Meantime below, as the music becomes violent, the prince advances across the dancing-space with his kris drawn. With a yell of defiance he starts up the bridge, just as a blood-curdling howl is heard inside the house, the voice of Rangda. Unexpectedly, fireworks, strung on invisible wires all over the trees, begin to explode over the heads of the crowd. The audience is on edge as the curtains part and the frightful form of Rangda appears, shrieking curses upon the prince, who is put to flight as the old witch descends, bellowing, amidst clouds of smoke, sparks, and explosions.

The climax is a critical moment, as it is never known what will happen next. It is not unusual for Rangda to run wild and go about the village moaning, or to disappear into the blackness of the ricefields. The actor, who is possessed by the spirit of the real Rangda, is hard to bring under control. I have been told of an old actor from Tedjakula who, after impersonating Rangda, ran amuck and went insane when captured. He is said never to have regained his mental balance. To the Balinese this was, once more, the evidence of the danger of releasing uncontrolled magic powers.

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

THE BARONG

776 754 The witch has a contender for supremacy in a fantastic animal, a mythical "lion" called Barong. Because of an ancient feud with Rangda, he sides with human beings to thwart her evil plans, and the Balinese say that without his help humanity would be destroyed. While Rangda is female, the magic of the "left," the Barong is the "right," the male. Rangda is the night, the darkness from which emanate illness and death. The Barong is the sun, the light, medicine, the antidote for evil.

[536] [778] Every community owns a set of the costumes and masks of both characters. These masks have great power in themselves and are kept out of sight in a special shed in the death temple of the village. They are put away in a basket, wrapped in a magic cloth that insulates their evil vibrations, and are uncovered only when actually in use, when the performer-medium is in a trance and under the control of a priest, and not before offerings have been made to prevent harm to the participants. At the feasts of the death temples their masks are uncovered and exhibited in one of the shrines. It is a good precaution to sprinkle these masks with holy water when someone is sick in the village.

Like the Rangda, the Barong is treated with great respect and the Balinese address him by titles such as Banaspati Radja, "Lord of the Jungle," or as Djeró Gedé, "The Big One," rather than as Barong, which is only a generic name for his sort of monster. (See Note 1, page 354.)

● 545 Despite his demoniac character, the Barong materializes in a trance play in which he is made to act foolishly and to dance for the amusement of the crowd. His costume consists of a great frame covered with long hair, with a sagging back of golden scales set with little mirrors. A beautifully arched gold tail sticks out of his rump and from it hang a square mirror, a bunch of peacock feathers, and a cluster of little bells that jingle at every move. Under a high gilt crown is his red mask, too small for his body, with bulging eyes and snapping jaws. The power of the

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

Barong is concentrated in his beard, a tuft of human hair decorated with flowers. The Barong is animated by two specially trained men who form the front and hind quarters of the animal, the man in front operating the mask with his hands.

In Pemetjutan the Barong play began with a performance of *djauk*, a group of boys wearing grinning white masks, who danced to the delicate tunes of a *legong* orchestra called in this case *bebarongan*. After the dance the two Barong performers went under the costume that lay inanimate on two poles, the mask covered by a white cloth. Like a circus prop-horse, the Barong danced, wiggling his hind quarters, lying down, contracting and expanding like an accordion, snapping his jaws, and in general behaving in a comic, rather undignified manner for his awesome character. After his gay outburst of animal spirits, he began a long dance, staring around as if astounded by magic visions that filled the air. He was constantly on the alert for invisible enemies, growing more and more alarmed, clicking his teeth like castanets as the tempo of the music increased. Firecrackers began to explode at the far end of the arena, startling the Barong, and when the smoke cleared, the figure of Rangda appeared, yelling curses at the Barong, who appeared humiliated by her insults. But eventually he reacted and they rushed at each other, fighting and rolling on the ground until the Barong was made to bite the dust.

In the meantime a group of half-naked men sitting on a mat went into a trance. They were the assistants of the Barong against Rangda. A priest consecrated some water by dipping the Barong's beard into it, and sprinkled the men, who shook all over as if in an epileptic fit. With their eyes glued on the Rangda, they got up, drawing their krisses, advancing like fidgety automatons towards the witch, who awaited them ready with her white cloth, her weapon, ready in her raised hand. Suddenly she ran after them, but just then one of the priests on watch noticed something unusual in her behaviour and passed the word that she was out of control. She was caught by a group

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

545 787 of strong men and led away, but not before she had put a spell on the entranced men by joining the thumbs of her outstretched hands and yelling a curse.

By the spell, the krisses in the hands of the men turned against them, but the magic of the Barong hardened their flesh so that, although they pushed the sharp points of the daggers with all their might against their naked chests, they were not even hurt. This was the explanation the Balinese gave of the strange exhibition and it seemed inconceivable that they were faking, such was the earnest force with which they seemed to try to stab themselves. Some leaped wildly or rolled in the dust, pressing the krisses against their breasts and crying like children, tears streaming from their eyes. Most showed dark marks where the point of the dagger bruised the skin without cutting it, but blood began to flow from the breast of one, the signal for the watchmen to disarm him by force.

It is said that only by a complete trance can the dance be performed with impunity; otherwise a man will wound himself or hurt others. They were closely watched and if one of them gave signs of returning to consciousness he was quickly and violently disarmed. Possessed as they are, they have supernatural strength and it takes many men to hold them down. Even after the kris has been wrenched away they continue to dance with a blank stare and with the right fist still clenched as if grasping the kris handle. To take the men out of the trance, they were led, one by one, to where the Barong stood; someone sucked the bleeding chest of the wounded man and stuck a red flower in the cut. The pemangku wiped the face of each man with the beard of the Barong dipped in holy water, and gradually the hysterical men came out of the trance, dazed, simply walking away as if they did not know what had happened to them.

2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

krisses, awkwardly conscious of being admired, marching in triple file to the beat of gongs and drums amidst bursting firecrackers.

The procession goes to the priest's house, where he waits to consecrate the effigies through a performance of *maweda*, the spoken formula emphasized by gestures of the hands. The priest recites his formulas, flings flowers, and sprinkles holy water towards the effigies, which are reverently held in front of him by the kneeling girls. After the ceremony the procession returns home, stopping along the way in the temple of the family's origin to offer a final prayer. At the house, towards dusk, the *baris* dancers perform war dances to cast a protecting net of magic vibrations, and shows are given to entertain the guests. Relatives, guests, and populace spend the night divided between watching an all-night shadow-play and listening to public readings of the Balinese classic *Bhima Swarga*, the tale of the fantastic adventures of Bhima on his visit to Hades. Tradition prescribes that this should be read aloud from beginning to end on the eve of cremation. In dark corners people huddle to steal naps. Outside, the orchestras, among them the *gambang*, only heard at cremations, boom and hum throughout the night.

THE CREMATION

The great towers in which the corpses are carried to the cremation ground and the animal-shaped coffins in which they will be burned, the two most spectacular factors in a cremation, have waited ready for days in some corner of the village, covered with screens of woven palm-leaf.

The cremation tower is a high structure solidly built of wood and bamboo, bound together with rattan and covered with coloured paper ornaments and cotton-wool dyed in bright colours, and glittering with tinsel and small mirrors. Shaped like the temple gates and the sun altars, the tower represents again the Balinese conception of the cosmos: a wide base, often in the shape of a turtle with two serpents entwined around its body, the symbol of the foundation upon which the world rests, sup-

6: Belo E-5 (1931-1934) 1935
OF7 Bali OF7

Behavior at the Plays

Whenever there is a performance of dancing, drama, or the shadow-show, the entire village attends. The audience is packed closely around the four sides of the "stage"—an oblong of level ground marked off with bamboos. The first arrivals squat as near as possible, folded up into the least possible space and pressed against each other, the late comers stand in rows eight or ten deep at the back, the rear-most able to catch only an occasional glimpse of a performer's headdress. In this tight formation the audience remains from the beginning, which for a play may be anywhere between the hours of nine and midnight, to the end which comes about dawn. The whole temper of the audience is, from the actor's standpoint, ideal—watching, concentrated as one man, happy and pleasantly disposed in the warm contact of a large group of their kind, in festive mood, ready to enjoy themselves to the utmost. On the appearance of a hero, particularly graceful and gorgeous in his attire, a whispered "Bèh!" of admiration issues from a hundred mouths; and when the clowns cavort, or a rough joke is made, the entire audience rocks with mirth, the high shrieks of the women's laughter rising above the guffaws of the men. The smallest children, from two or three years upward, constitute the first rows of the audience surrounding the stage. They arrive long before the performers have any thought of beginning, and sit, in quiet expectancy, sometimes for several hours before the play begins. If for any reason a child arrives late, he will with confidence squeeze his way through the crowd, pushing past people of higher rank and superior in age, to a good place in the very front. During the performance, the children watch every detail of the action with intentness.[8] Generally even the tiniest ones stay through the night, although they fall asleep for hours at a time, and only manage to wake up for the most exciting parts, battles, or the enacting of bewitchment.

Older boys and girls, especially those who have passed adolescence, come to the performance in groups of two or three friends.

[8] In connection with the close integration of the Balinese children with the life of their elders, one sees a parallel with the gentle and maternal Arapesh people, as described by Margaret Mead. She says of their children, ". . . games are played very seldom. More often the times when children are together in large enough groups to make a game worth while are the occasions of a feast, there is dancing and adult ceremonial, and they find the rôle of spectatorship far more engrossing." And again, ". . . early experience accustoms them to be part of the whole picture, to prefer to any active child-life of their own a passive part that is integrated with the life of the community" (*Sex and Temperament*, New York, William Morrow and Company, 1935, pp. 57-58).

6: Belo E-5 (1931-1934) 1935
OF7 Bali OF7

the girls with their arms entwined about each other, the boys often holding hands. Such a group of boys will arrange to sit down in a place immediately behind a group of girls, so that, as the press in the audience increases, they will be huddled more and more together. It would be unseemly to stroke or to caress a member of the opposite sex in public. But if a girl is so placed that she must lean against one's knee, or her shoulder touch one's shoulder and her sleepy head droop, who can find fault? In the dim light—for the stage is illumined by only one or two flickering oil lamps, and the audience is in almost complete obscurity—flirtation is favored. Occasionally a girl rises and leaves the audience, to be followed after a short interval by the youth who has been seated near her. One supposes that a rendezvous has been arranged for a few moments of stolen love in the surrounding darkness.

Development of Decorum

By the time boys and girls have fully matured, they must behave with the decorous composure proper for adults. A boy of fifteen who belonged to my household was sometimes guilty of acts of clumsiness or thoughtless irresponsibility. He broke a plate in the washing of it, or he quietly made away with half a jar of the master's jam. These misdemeanors I was apt to excuse on the grounds of his youth. But the mature men were more stern with him. "Among us," they said, "a boy of that age is considered already big. He may not behave like a small child." Very marked was the change which came in Tjamploen, a talented little dancing girl, as she passed adolescence. When I first knew her she was a wiry child of eleven or twelve, the points of her breasts barely beginning to show. At that age she was a little devil, nervous and full of life, wriggling about, always up to some prank or mischief. A gifted mimic, she would make fun of anyone or anything, and go off into hilarious laughter at her own jests, bending her slim body back and forth, slapping her thighs, or the shoulder of any person who happened to be near her. Two years later she had grown tall, and her breasts had rounded out. She was no longer eligible to dance in the group of three little *lègong* dancers of her village, although it was to a large extent her own talent which had made these dancers famous, so that they were in demand to play at festivals in the surrounding district. Tjamploen trained a new set of six-year-old dancers for her village. Then she was engaged by various other villages within a radius of